

2006 Preface

International Religious Freedom Report 2006

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Why the Reports are Prepared

This report is submitted to the Congress by the Department of State in compliance with Section 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998. The law provides that the secretary of state, with the assistance of the ambassador at large for international religious freedom, shall transmit to Congress "an Annual Report on International Religious Freedom supplementing the most recent Human Rights Reports by providing additional detailed information with respect to matters involving international religious freedom."

How the Reports are Prepared

U.S. embassies prepare the initial drafts of these reports, gathering information from a variety of sources, including government and religious officials, nongovernmental organizations, journalists, human rights monitors, religious groups, and academics. This information-gathering can be hazardous, and U.S. foreign service officers regularly go to great lengths, under trying and sometimes dangerous conditions, to investigate reports of human rights abuse, to monitor elections, and to come to the aid of individuals at risk because of their religious beliefs.

The Office of International Religious Freedom collaborated in collecting and analyzing information for the country reports, drawing on the expertise of other Department of State offices, religious organizations, other non-governmental organizations, foreign government officials, representatives from the United Nations and other international and regional organizations and institutions, and experts from academia and the media. In compiling and editing the country reports, the Office of International Religious Freedom consulted with experts on issues of religious discrimination and persecution, religious leaders from a wide variety of faiths, and experts on legal matters. The offices guiding principle was to ensure that all relevant information was assessed as objectively, thoroughly, and fairly as possible.

The report will be used by a wide range of U.S. government departments, agencies, and offices to shape policy; conduct diplomacy; inform assistance, training, and other resource allocations; and help determine which countries have engaged in or tolerated "particularly severe violations" of religious freedom, otherwise known as Countries of Particular Concern.

This document, like several other State Department reports, uses the Chicago Manual of Style format. For that reason, it uses a style of capitalization in which, in general, only full proper names are capitalized. In this style, for example, "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice" is capitalized, but "secretary of state" is not. No disrespect is meant to foreign or domestic leaders through this style of capitalization.

A Word on Usage

When the International Religious Freedom Report states that a country "generally respected" the right of religious freedom over the reporting period, this phrase signifies that the country attempted to protect religious freedom in the fullest sense. "Generally respected" is thus the highest level of respect for religious freedom assigned by this report. The phrase "generally respected" is used because the protection and promotion of religious freedom is a dynamic endeavor; it cannot be stated categorically that any government fully respected this right over the reporting year, even in the best of circumstances.

Acknowledgements

The 2006 report covers the period from July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2006, and reflects a year of dedicated effort by hundreds of foreign service and civil service officers in the Department of State and U.S. missions abroad. We thank the many foreign service officers at our embassies and consulates abroad for monitoring and promoting religious freedom, and for chronicling in detail the status of religious liberty. In addition to their efforts, we acknowledge the diligent labor and tireless commitment to religious freedom of those within the Office of International Religious Freedom whose work made this report possible: Clarissa Adamson, Patricia Aguilo, Philip Barth, Donna Brutkoski, Warren Cofsky, Doug Dearborn, Karen DeBolt, Lisa DeBolt, Sarah Drake,

Kenneth Durkin, Maureen Gaffney, Nancy Hewett, Jeremy Howard, Victor Huser, Shellette Jackson, Anthony Jones, Emilie Kao, Patrick Kelly, Stephen Liston, Kathryn Lurie, Mary Maher, Michael Mates, Safia Mohamoud, Joannella Morales, Aaron Pina, and Deborah Schneider. The work of all of these individuals advances the cause of freedom, ensures accuracy in our reporting, and brings hope to repressed people around the world.

Released September 2006 by Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom John V. Hanford III

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